12-22-99

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DOCKET NO. : BELL-0006//99152 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Re Application of:

Darin Morrow; John Strohmeyer; Mark Kirkpatrick

Serial No.: Not Yet Assigned **Group Art Unit: Not Yet Assigned**

Filing Date: Herewith **Examiner: Not Yet Assigned**

For: AUTOMATIC STATUS NOTIFICATION

EXPRESS MAIL LABEL NO: EL 531 274 119 US
DATE OF DEPOSIT: December 21, 1999

Box ☒ **Patent Application**

☐ Provisional ☐ Design

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington DC 20231

Sir:

PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Transmitted herewith for filing, please find

☒ **A Utility Patent Application under 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b).**

It is a continuing application, as follows:

☐ continuation ☐ divisional ☐ continuation-in-part of prior application number ___/_____.

☐ A Provisional Patent Application under 37 C.F.R. 1.53(c).

☐ A Design Patent Application (submitted in duplicate).

Including the following:

☐ Provisional Application Cover Sheet.

☒ **New or Revised Specification, including pages 1 to 15 containing:**

☒ **Specification**

☒ **Claims**

☒ **Abstract**

☐ Substitute Specification, including Claims and Abstract.

☐ The present application is a continuation application of Application No. _____filed _____. The present application includes the Specification of the parent application which has been revised in accordance with the amendments filed in the parent application. Since none of those amendments incorporate new matter into the parent application, the present revised Specification also does not include new matter.

☐ The present application is a continuation application of Application No. _____filed _____, which in turn is a continuation-in-part of Application No. _____filed _____. The present application includes the Specification of the parent application which has been revised in accordance with the amendments filed in the parent application. Although the amendments in the parent C-I-P application may have incorporated new matter, since those are the only revisions included in the present application, the present application includes no new matter in relation to the parent application.

☐ A copy of earlier application Serial No. _____Filed _____, including Specification, Claims and Abstract (pages 1 - @@), to which no new matter has been added TOGETHER WITH a copy of the executed oath or declaration for such earlier application and all drawings and appendices. Such earlier application is hereby incorporated into the present application by reference.

☐ Please enter the following amendment to the Specification under the Cross-Reference to Related Applications section (or create such a section) : "This Application: ☐ is a continuation of ☐ is a divisional of ☐ claims benefit of U.S. provisional Application Serial No. _____filed _____
_____

_____

_____

_____.

☐ Signed Statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application.

☐ A Preliminary Amendment.

☒ **TWO (2) Sheets of ☒ Formal ☐ Informal Drawings.**

☐ Petition to Accept Photographic Drawings.

☐ Petition Fee

☒ **An ☐ Executed ☒ Unexecuted Declaration or Oath and Power of Attorney.**

☐ An Associate Power of Attorney.

☐ An ☐ Executed ☐ Copy of Executed Assignment of the Invention to _____

_____.

☐ A Recordation Form Cover Sheet.

☐ Recordation Fee - $40.00.

☐ The prior application is assigned of record to _____

☐ Priority is claimed under 35 U.S.C. § 119 of Patent Application No. _____ filed _____ in _____ (country).

☐ A Certified Copy of each of the above applications for which priority is claimed:

☐ is enclosed.

☐ has been filed in prior application Serial No. _____ filed _____.

☐ An ☐ Executed or ☐ Copy of Executed Earlier Statement Claiming Small Entity Status under 37 C.F.R. 1.9 and 1.27

☐ is enclosed.

☐ has been filed in prior application Serial No. _____ filed _____, said status is still proper and desired in present case.

☐ Diskette Containing DNA/Amino Acid Sequence Information.

☐ Statement to Support Submission of DNA/Amino Acid Sequence Information.

☐ The computer readable form in this application _____, is identical with that filed in Application Serial Number _____, filed _____. In accordance with 37 CFR 1.821(e), please use the ☐ first-filed, ☐ last-filed or ☐ only computer readable form filed in that application as the computer readable form for the instant application. It is understood that the Patent and Trademark Office will make the necessary change in application number and filing date for the computer readable form that will be used for the instant application. A paper copy of the Sequence Listing is ☐ included in the originally-filed specification of the instant application, ☐ included in a separately filed preliminary amendment for incorporation into the specification.

☐ Information Disclosure Statement.

- ☐ Attached Form 1449.
- ☐ Copies of each of the references listed on the attached Form PTO-1449 are enclosed herewith.

☐ A copy of Petition for Extension of Time as filed in the prior case.

☐ Appended Material as follows: _____

☒ Return Receipt Postcard (should be specifically itemized).

☐ Other as follows: _____

_____

_____

_____.

FEE CALCULATION:

☐ Cancel in this application original claims _____of the prior application before calculating the filing fee. (At least one original independent claim must be retained for filing purposes.)

			SMALL ENTITY		NOT SMALL ENTITY	
			RATE	FEE	RATE	FEE
PROVISIONAL APPLICATION			$75.00	$	$150.00	$
DESIGN APPLICATION			$155.00	$	$310.00	$
UTILITY APPLICATIONS BASE FEE			$380.00	$	$760.00	**$ 760.00**
UTILITY APPLICATION; ALL CLAIMS CALCULATED AFTER ENTRY OF ALL AMENDMENTS						
	No. Filed	No. Extra				
TOTAL CLAIMS	24- 20 =	4	$9 each	$	$18 each	**$ 72.00**
INDEP. CLAIMS	2- 3 =	0	$39 each	$	$78 each	$ 0
FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM			$130	$	$260	$
ADDITIONAL FILING FEE				$		$
TOTAL FILING FEE DUE				$		**$ 832.00**

☒ **A Check is enclosed in the amount of $ 832.00 .**

☒ The Commissioner is authorized to charge payment of the following fees and to refund any overpayment associated with this communication or during the pendency of this application to deposit account 23-3050. This sheet is provided in duplicate.

☐ The foregoing amount due.

☒ Any additional filing fees required, including fees for the presentation of extra claims under 37 C.F.R. 1.16.

☒ Any additional patent application processing fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.17 or 1.20(d).

☐ The issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance.

☒ The Commissioner is hereby requested to grant an extension of time for the

appropriate length of time, should one be necessary, in connection with this filing or any future filing submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in the above-identified application during the pendency of this application. The Commissioner is further authorized to charge any fees related to any such extension of time to deposit account 23-3050. This sheet is provided in duplicate.

SHOULD ANY DEFICIENCIES APPEAR with respect to this application, including deficiencies in payment of fees, missing parts of the application or otherwise, the United States Patent and Trademark Office is respectfully requested to promptly notify the undersigned.

Date: Dec. 21, 1999

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EL531274119US

Title of the Invention

AUTOMATIC STATUS NOTIFICATION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a method and system for providing automatic notification of the status of a project. In particular, the present invention relates to providing automatic status notification by way of an electronic mail system.

Background of the Invention

In a relatively complex project, it is commonplace to maintain status information for the project. For example, a manufacturer of a relatively complex electronic product commonly wishes to keep track of the status of each phase of the manufacturing of the product, the status of the manufacturing of each system component, etc. Typically, to maintain such status information, a computer system and database are employed as a status system, and such status system receives and stores a plurality of pre-determined goals and sub-goals (i.e., project milestones), as well as information regarding when each project milestone is reached. One such status system is Work and Force Administration system, designed and/or marketed by Telcordia Technologies (formerly Bellcore) of Morristown, New Jersey.

With such a status system, status information regarding the status of a product in production is available to the manufacturer thereof almost instantaneously.

Notably, the customer for whom the product is being manufactured would likely appreciate if not demand that such status information be available to it, too, almost instantaneously. However, and as is to be readily appreciated, providing such customer with access to the manufacturer's status system raises serious security issues, among other things. As a result, such access is not usually provided, even though this may in turn require that the manufacturer constantly update the customer on the status of the product under manufacture.

Accordingly, a need exists for a method and a system to automatically notify the customer of updates in the status of the product under manufacture without providing the customer with direct access to the manufacturer's status system.

Summary of the Invention

In the present invention, a status reporting system (SRS) automatically reports updated status of a project to an interested party based on status information stored in a status system. The SRS is communicatively coupled to the status system and includes a monitoring device that contacts the status system to determine whether such status system has new status information stored therein and obtains such new status information from the status system. An internal mail device receives the obtained status information, ascertains from the received status information the interested party, locates an electronic mail address for the interested party, formats the received status information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the received status information and the located electronic mail address, and forwards the piece of electronic mail to the interested party by way of an electronic mail service.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the present invention, will be better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there are shown in the drawings embodiments which are presently preferred. As should be understood, however, the invention is not limited to the precise arrangements and instrumentalities shown. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram showing an apparatus for providing automatic status notification in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 2 is a flow chart showing steps performed by the apparatus of Fig. 1 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments

Referring now to Fig. 1, in the present invention, a status reporting system (SRS) 10 is coupled to a status system 12 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. As was pointed out above, the status system 12 allows a manufacturer, for example, to keep track of the status of each phase of the manufacturing of the product, the status of the manufacturing of each system component, etc. Of course, other types of entities may employ such status system 12 and such SRS 10 in combination therewith without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Such other entities include but are not limited to product developers, software developers, building and trade contractors, administrators, and the like. The status system 12 may for example be the aforementioned Legacy 7 system, although other status systems 12 may be employed without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention, and may run on any particular type of system and processor, again without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

As was also pointed out above, the status system 12 includes a database 14 or the like that receives and stores a plurality of pre-determined goals and sub-goals (i.e., project milestones), as well as information regarding whether and when each project milestone is reached. For example, for a relatively complex piece of electronic equipment ordered by a customer A, the database 14 may include milestones including whether and when each assembly is completed, each sub-assembly is completed, each circuit board is completed, each assembly is tested, each sub-assembly is tested, each circuit board is tested, each assembly is installed, each sub-assembly is installed, each circuit board is installed, etc. Presumably, the status system 12 is promptly updated on an ongoing basis as the piece of equipment proceeds toward completion.

Notably, the status system 12 likely tracks status for a plurality of projects, each of which may have a different customer or ultimate destination ('customer').

Preferably, the status system 12 tags each piece of information therein with an ID for the project to which it applies and an ID for the customer. The ID may also or instead be for any other interested party.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the SRS 10 is coupled to the status system 12 by an appropriate connection, such as a network connection, a direct connection, a telephone connection, etc., although any other connection may be employed without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. As seen in Fig. 1, the SRS 10 includes a monitoring device 16 that periodically contacts the status system 12 by way of the aforementioned connection to determine if there is new status information to report out.

The monitoring device 16 may determine whether there is new status information to report out by referring to a status database 18 in or associated with the SRS 10. In one embodiment of the present invention, the status database 18 includes all previous status information with regard to each ongoing project. Thus, the monitoring device 10 may compare the status information for each project as stored in the status database 18 and the status information for each project as provided by the status system 12 and note any differences. As should be evident, such differences identify new status information that is to be reported out. Preferably, once reported out, the status information for each project stored in the status database 18 is updated with the new status information. Accordingly, the updated status information for each project as stored in the status database 18 and the status information for each project as provided by the status system 12 should coincide.

As may be appreciated, storing all status information for each project in the status database 18 may require an excessive amount of storage space. Accordingly, in another embodiment of the present invention, only the time of the last review by the monitoring device 16 is stored in the status database 18, each piece of status information stored in the status system 12 is tagged with a time stamp, and the monitoring device 16 looks in the status system 12 for only those pieces of status information stored therein that have a time stamp later than the time of the last review as stored in the status database 18. Preferably, once such pieces of status information have been reported out, the status database 18 is updated with the time of the present review. Thus, the next review by the

monitoring device 16 of the status system 12 will locate only those pieces of status information stored therein subsequent to the present review.

In still another embodiment of the present invention, the status system 12 keeps track of those pieces of status information that have been reported, either by appropriately tagging such pieces of status information or otherwise. Thus, the monitoring device 16 need only request that the status system 12 provide those pieces of status information that have not as yet been reported. Preferably, once reported, such pieces of status information are marked as reported. As should be appreciated, in this embodiment, the status database 18 of the SRS 10 is not believed to be necessary since the status system 12 itself is keeping track of those pieces of status information that have been reported. However, this embodiment may require modifications to the status system 12 to allow such status system 12 to keep track of those pieces of status information that have been reported.

The monitoring device 16 of the SRS 10 may be configured to check the status system 12 for new status information on demand. Preferably, though, the monitoring device 16 is configured to automatically check the status system 12 on a periodic basis, for example once a day, once an hour, or once each minute. The frequency of course will vary depending on the amount of new status information expected, the timeliness with which the new status information is expected by customers, system resources, and the like.

Once the monitoring device 16 of the SRS 10 has determined that there is new status information to report out to customers, such SRS 10 obtains and stores such new status information in a memory 19 in an appropriate manner. Parenthetically, the status database 18 may be stored in the memory 19 or elsewhere. Of course, any method and/or device for actually obtaining and storing the new status information may be employed without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Once obtained and stored, though, such new status information must be reported out to the customer.

As was discussed above, the status system 12 preferably tags each piece of information therein with an ID identifying the relevant customer. The SRS 10 is preferably provided with such ID for each piece of status information received from the

status system 12, and therefore can identify the customer from such ID and forward the piece of information to such customer based on such ID. In one embodiment of the present invention, the SRS 10 forwards each piece of information to its associated customer by way of an electronic mail service 30. Any appropriate electronic mail service 30 may be employed without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, the electronic mail service 30 may be an Internet E-Mail service, where the piece of information is formatted into an Internet E-Mail form and is addressed to the customer by way of an appropriate Internet E-Mail address. The mail service 30 may also be an Internet or telephone-based voice mail service, where the piece of information is formatted into a voice mail form and is sent to the customer by way of an appropriate Internet address or telephone number.

In one embodiment of the present invention, then, and as seen in Fig. 1, the SRS 10 includes an internal mail device 20 that receives each piece of information from the monitoring device 16, that ascertains from the received piece of information the customer ID, that locates a customer electronic mail address for the customer based on the customer ID, and that formats the piece of information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the piece of information and the located customer electronic mail address. Notably, the electronic mail device 20 may produce such piece of electronic mail in any form without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, such piece of electronic mail may be text-based (i.e., e-mail or the like), sound-based (i.e., voice mail or the like), video-based, etc.

Preferably, and as seen in Fig. 1, to locate the customer electronic mail address for the customer, the SRS 10 includes a customer database 22 which includes such information for each customer ID used by the status system 12, and the internal mail device 20 is provided access to such customer database 22. Parenthetically, the customer database 22 may be stored in the memory 19 or elsewhere. Accordingly, if a piece of information is tagged with a particular customer ID, the internal mail device 20 can locate a corresponding electronic mail address for such particular customer ID by referring to the customer database 22. Of course, the type of electronic mail address may vary based on whether the electronic mail is text-based, sound-based, video-based, etc. Accordingly, any type of mail address may be employed without departing from the spirit and scope of the

present invention.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the customer ID in the customer database 22 cross-references a plurality of pre-defined corresponding electronic mail addresses, perhaps including a variety of types of addresses (such as text-based, sound-based, video-based, etc.). Thus, the internal mail device 20 can appropriately format the piece of information into a piece of electronic mail and send the mail to the plurality of electronic mail addresses. Of course, if some addresses are text-based and some addresses are voice-based, for example, the internal mail device 20 must appropriately format the piece of information into a piece of text-based electronic mail and a piece of voice-based electronic mail, send the text-based mail to the text-based addresses, and send the voice-based mail to the voice-based addresses. As should be appreciated, then, status notification can be sent to multiple entities. For example, status notification for an ordered product may be sent to an entity that ordered the product, an entity that is responsible for product delivery, an entity that is responsible for financing the purchase of the product, an entity at a financial institution that will provide the funds to finance the product, and the like.

Once properly formatted, the internal mail device 20 then delivers the piece of electronic mail to an external mail system 24. The external mail system 24 may be any appropriate mail system without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Of course, the external mail system 24 should be able to appropriately handle any type of mail received, be it text-based, voice-based, video-based, or otherwise. Alternatively, multiple external mail systems 24 may be employed, at least one for each type of mail received. As seen in Fig. 1, the external mail system 24 may include a mail utility 26 for configuring the piece of electronic mail for further processing, and a mail server 28 that receives the configured piece of electronic mail from the mail utility 26 and then forwards the piece of electronic mail to its ultimate destination by way of the aforementioned electronic mail service 30.

With the architecture of Fig. 1 thus far described, the method of operation of the present invention is as follows.

Referring now to Fig. 2, it is seen that the monitoring device 16 of the SRS 10 periodically contacts the status system 12 to determine if there is new status

information to report out (step 201). As was discussed above, such determination may be made with reference to the status database 18 of the SRS 10 to identify new pieces of status information. Such new status information is obtained by the monitoring device 16 from the status system (step 203), and the status database 18 is appropriately updated (step 205). Each piece of obtained status information is then reported out to the respective customer.

Specifically, each piece of information is forwarded from the monitoring device 16 to the internal mail device 20 (step 207), and such internal mail device 20 ascertains from the forwarded piece of information the customer ID (step 209), locates in the customer database 22 a customer electronic mail address for the customer based on the customer ID (step 211), and formats the piece of information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the piece of information and the located customer electronic mail address (step 213). Of course, if the customer database 22 includes multiple addresses, the piece of information is formatted into a piece of electronic mail which includes the piece of information and each of the multiple addresses so that the piece of information is sent to each of the multiple addresses.

The internal mail device 20 then delivers the formatted piece of electronic mail to the external mail system 24 (step 215). Once received, such external mail system 24 then forwards the piece of electronic mail to its ultimate destination by way of the electronic mail service 30 (step 217).

In one embodiment of the present invention, in addition to or instead of receiving electronic mail notifications of new status information, a customer may access the SRS 10 to collect new status information on demand. In such a situation, and referring again to Fig. 1, an appropriate gateway 32 is provided between an external network 33 (the Internet, the public switched telephone system, etc.) and the SRS 10, and the SRS 10 is provided with an appropriate portal 34 to allow for such customer access. Of course, the portal 34 would ensure that only appropriate parties can access the SRS 10, for example by way of an ID and password, and each party accessing the SRS 10 is provided only with data relevant to such party. Any appropriate gateway 32 and portal 34 may be employed without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. The protocols and apparatus employed by such gateway 32 and portal 34 are generally known and therefore

need not be described herein in any detail.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the SRS 10 is constituted as a series of software modules running on a computer or server. However, some or all of the software modules may instead be hardware modules without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. The programming necessary to effectuate the present invention, such as the programming run by the SRS 10, the status system 12, and the external mail system 24, is known or is readily apparent to the relevant public. Accordingly, further details herein as to the specifics of such programming is not believed to be necessary.

As should now be understood, in the present invention, a method and system are provided to automatically notify a customer of updates in the status of the product under manufacture without providing the customer with direct access to the manufacturer's status system. Changes could be made to the embodiments described above without departing from the broad inventive concepts thereof. It is understood, therefore, that the present invention is not limited to the particular embodiments disclosed, but is intended to cover modifications within the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. A status reporting system (SRS) for automatically reporting updated status of a project to an interested party based on status information stored in a status system, the SRS being communicatively coupled to the status system and comprising:

a monitoring device contacting the status system to determine whether such status system has new status information stored therein and obtaining such new status information from the status system; and

an internal mail device receiving the obtained status information, ascertaining from the received status information the interested party, locating an electronic mail address for the interested party, formatting the received status information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the received status information and the located electronic mail address, and forwarding the piece of electronic mail to the interested party by way of an electronic mail service.

2. The SRS of claim 1 wherein the electronic mail service is selected from a group consisting of an Internet E-Mail mail service, an Internet voice mail service, and a telephone-based voice mail service, and wherein the internal mail device formats the received status information into a piece of electronic mail compatible with the selected electronic mail service.

3. The SRS of claim 1 further comprising an ID database, wherein the status system tags the status information stored therein with an ID identifying the interested party, wherein the ID database includes a record having the ID and the electronic mail address for the interested party, and wherein the internal mail device locates the electronic mail address for the interested party from the ID database based on the ID tagged to the received status information.

4. The SRS of claim 3 wherein the ID database includes a record having the ID and electronic mail addresses for a plurality of interested parties, and wherein the internal mail device locates the electronic mail addresses for the plurality of interested parties from the ID database based on the ID tagged to the received status information, formats the received status information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the received status information and the located electronic mail addresses, and forwards the piece of electronic mail to the plurality of interested parties by way of the electronic mail service.

5. The SRS of claim 1 further comprising a status database including status data, the monitoring device referring to the status data in the status database in conjunction with determining whether the status system has new status information stored therein.

6. The SRS of claim 5 wherein the status data in the status database includes previous status information obtained from the status system for the project, and wherein the monitoring device compares the status information for the project as stored in the status database and the status information for the project as stored in the status system and notes differences that identify the new status information.

7. The SRS of claim 6 wherein the status database is updated with the new status information.

8. The SRS of claim 5 wherein each piece of status information stored in the status system is tagged with a time stamp, wherein the status data in the status database includes a time indicative of a last contact review of the status system by the monitoring device, and wherein the monitoring device obtains from the status system only those pieces of status information stored therein that have a time stamp later than the time of the last review as stored in the status database.

9. The SRS of claim 8 wherein the status database is updated with a

time indicative of the present review.

10. The SRS of claim 1 wherein the monitoring device contacts the status system and obtains the new status information therefrom automatically on a periodic basis.

11. The SRS of claim 1 for automatically reporting updated status of a plurality of projects to corresponding interested party based on status information stored in the status system, wherein the internal mail device receives obtained pieces of status information, ascertains from each received piece of status information the corresponding interested party, locates an electronic mail address for the corresponding interested party, formats the received piece of status information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the received piece of status information and the located corresponding electronic mail address, and forwards the piece of electronic mail to the corresponding interested party by way of the electronic mail service.

12. The SRS of claim 1 further comprising a memory storing the obtained new status information.

13. A method for automatically reporting updated status of a project to an interested party based on status information stored in a status system, the method comprising:

contacting the status system to determine whether such status system has new status information stored therein, and obtaining such new status information from the status system;

ascertaining from the obtained status information the interested party;

locating an electronic mail address for the interested party;

formatting the obtained status information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the received status information and the located electronic mail address; and

forwarding the piece of electronic mail to the interested party by way of an electronic mail service.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the electronic mail service is selected from a group consisting of an Internet E-Mail mail service, an Internet voice mail service, and a telephone-based voice mail service, and comprising formatting the obtained status information into a piece of electronic mail compatible with the selected electronic mail service.

15. The method of claim 13 comprising ascertaining the interested party from an ID identifying the interested party and tagged to the received status information and locating the electronic mail address for the interested party based on the ID tagged to the received status information.

16. The method of claim 15 comprising ascertaining a plurality of interested parties from an ID identifying the plurality of interested parties and tagged to the received status information and locating an electronic mail address for each interested party based on the ID tagged to the received status information.

17. The method of claim 13 further comprising referring to status data in conjunction with determining whether the status system has new status information stored therein.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the status data includes previous status information obtained from the status system for the project, the method comprising comparing the previous status information for the project and the status information for the project as stored in the status system and noting differences that identify the new status information.

19. The method of claim 18 comprising updating the status data with the new status information.

20. The method of claim 17 wherein each piece of status information stored in the status system is tagged with a time stamp, and wherein the status data includes a time indicative of a last contact review of the status system, the method comprising obtaining from the status system only those pieces of status information stored therein that have a time stamp later than the time of the last review as stored in the status data.

21. The method of claim 20 comprising updating the status data with a time indicative of the present review.

22. The method of claim 13 comprising contacting the status system and obtaining the new status information therefrom automatically on a periodic basis.

23. The method of claim 13 comprising automatically reporting updated status of a plurality of projects to corresponding interested party based on status information stored in the status system.

24. The method of claim 13 further comprising storing the obtained new status information in a memory.

Abstract of the Disclosure

A status reporting system (SRS) automatically reports updated status of a project to an interested party based on status information stored in a status system. The SRS is communicatively coupled to the status system and includes a monitoring device that contacts the status system to determine whether such status system has new status information stored therein and obtains such new status information from the status system. An internal mail device receives the obtained status information, ascertains from the received status information the interested party, locates an electronic mail address for the interested party, formats the received status information into a piece of electronic mail which includes the received status information and the located electronic mail address, and forwards the piece of electronic mail to the interested party by way of an electronic mail service.

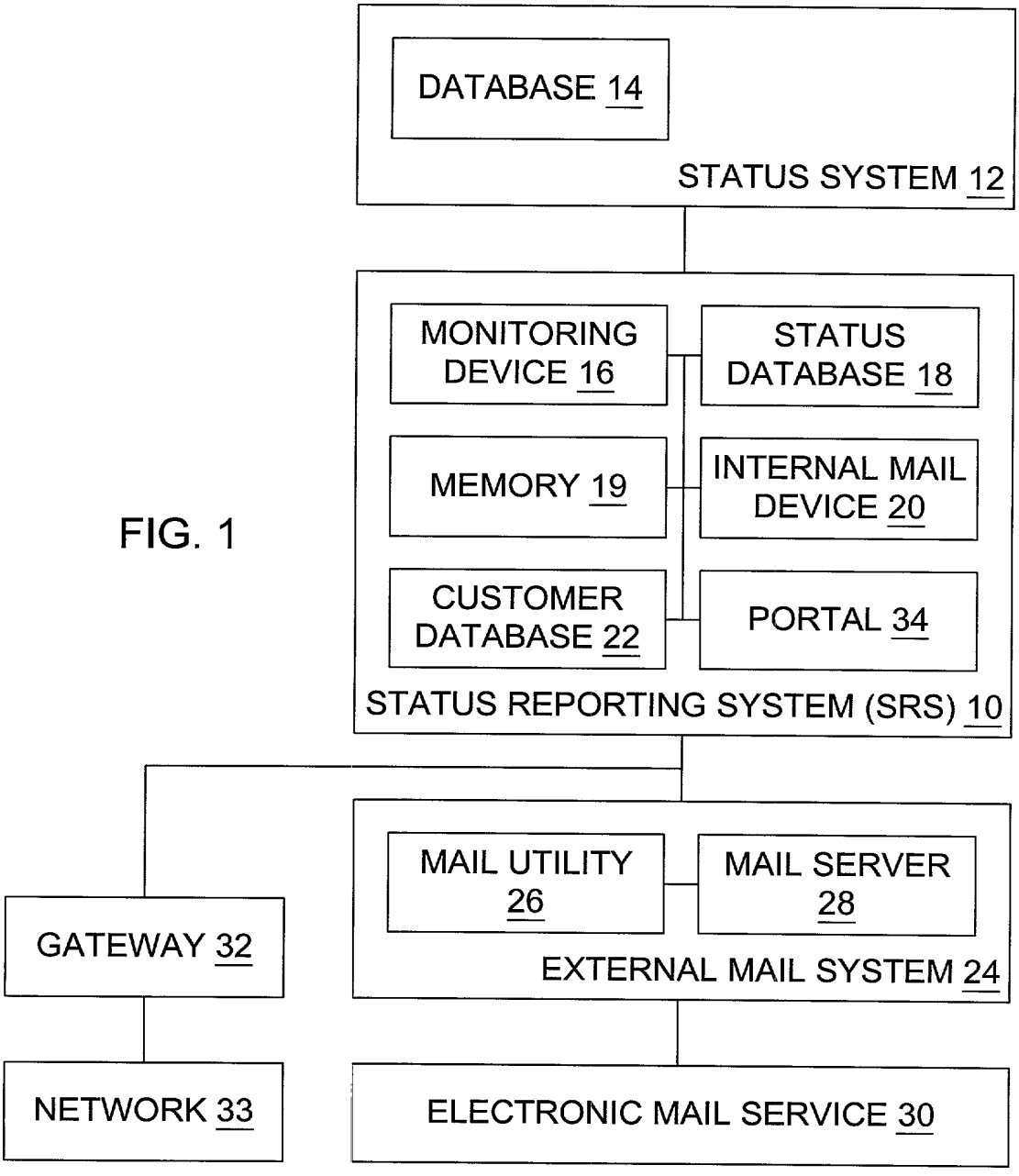

FIG. 1

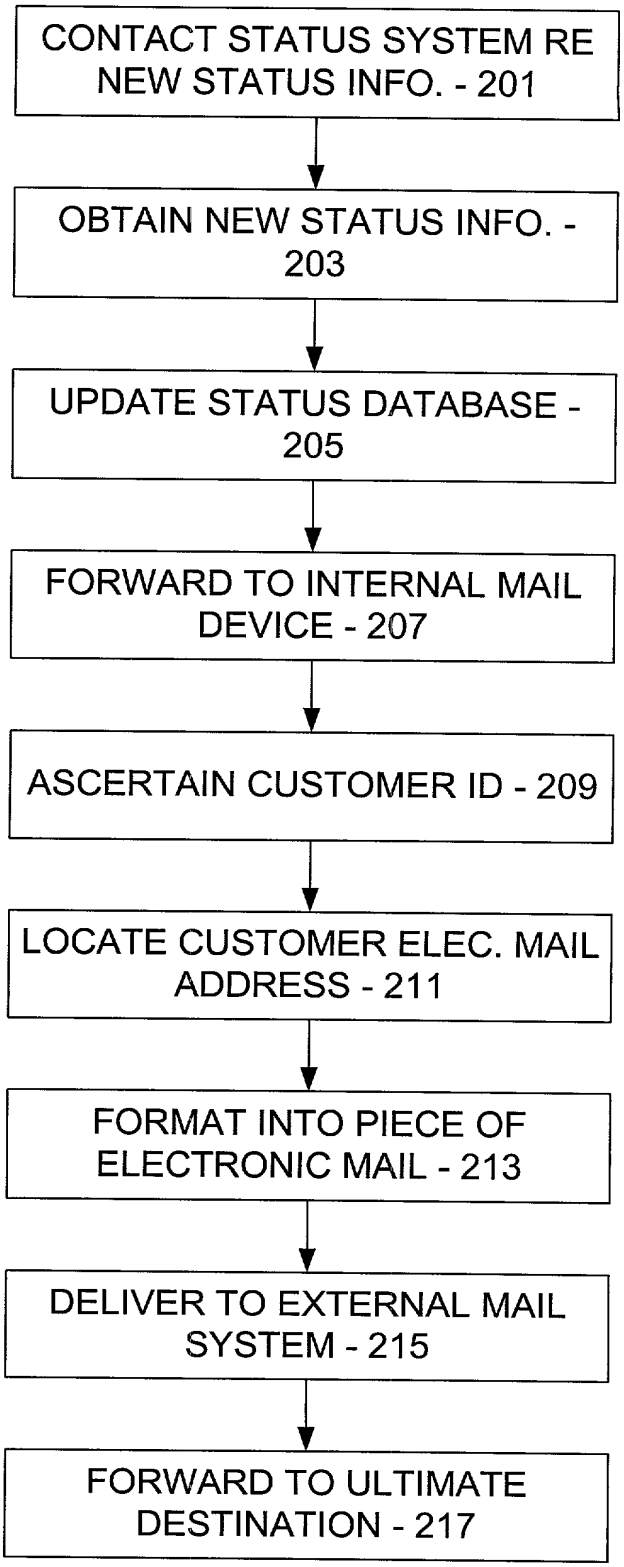

FIG. 2

DOCKET NO. BELL-0006/99152 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Re Application of:

Darin Morrow
John Strohmeyer
Mark Kirkpatrick

Group Art Unit: Not Yet Assigned

Examiner: Not Yet Assigned

For: AUTOMATIC STATUS NOTIFICATION

Docket No. BELL-0006/99152

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name; and

I believe that I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a

☒ Utility Patent ☐ Design Patent

is sought on the invention, whose title appears above, the specification of which:

☒ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on _____ as Serial No. _____

☐ said application having been amended on _____

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office all information known to be material to the patentability of this application in accordance with 37 CFR § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a-d) of any **foreign**

application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of any application on which priority is claimed:

Priority Claimed (If X'd)	Country	Serial Number	Date Filed
☐			
☐			
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I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office all information known to be material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

Serial Number	Date Filed	Patented/Pending/Abandoned

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

Serial Number	Date Filed
_____	_____
_____	_____

I hereby appoint the following persons of the firm of **WOODCOCK WASHBURN KURTZ MACKIEWICZ & NORRIS LLP**, One Liberty Place - 46th Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103 as attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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